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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[Docket No. 181010932-9124-02; RTID 0648-XX028]

**Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Bluefish Fishery; Quota
Transfer from NC to RI**

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notification of quota transfer.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the State of North Carolina is transferring a portion of its 2019 commercial bluefish quota to the State of Rhode Island. This quota adjustment is necessary to comply with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan quota transfer provisions. This announcement informs the public of the revised commercial bluefish quotas for North Carolina and Rhode Island.

DATES: Effective [*insert date of filing for public inspection with the Office of the Federal Register*], through December 31, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cynthia Ferrio, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9180.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Regulations governing the Atlantic bluefish fishery are found in 50 CFR 648.160 through 648.167. These regulations require annual specification of a commercial quota that is apportioned among the coastal states from

Maine through Florida. The process to set the annual commercial quota and the percent allocated to each state is described in § 648.162 and the initial 2019 allocations were published on March 12, 2019 (84 FR 8826).

The final rule implementing Amendment 1 to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan published in the **Federal Register** on July 26, 2000 (65 FR 45844), and provided a mechanism for transferring bluefish quota from one state to another. Two or more states, under mutual agreement and with the concurrence of the NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator, can request approval to transfer or combine bluefish commercial quota under § 648.162(e)(1)(i) through (iii). The Regional Administrator must first approve any such transfer based on the criteria in § 648.162(e).

North Carolina is transferring 150,000 lb (63 mt) of bluefish commercial quota to Rhode Island through mutual agreement of the states. This transfer was requested to ensure that Rhode Island would not exceed its allocated 2019 state quota. The revised bluefish quotas for 2019 are: North Carolina, 2,321,746 lb (1,053 mt); and Rhode Island, 674,874 lb (306 mt).

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR part 648 and is exempt from review under

Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 2, 2019.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

Acting Director,

Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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